

Message Text

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USMISSION NATO
USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA
USDEL MBFR VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 0294

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, UR, US, PARM, CH
SUBJECT: BOVIN ON 1977 PERSPECTIVES

REF: MOSCOW 0220

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. IN JAN 5 REMARKS ON 1977 PERSPECTIVES,
IZVESTIYA SENIOR COMMENTATOR BOVIN:

-- GAVE HOPEFUL MARKS TO NEW ADMINISTRATION FOREIGN
POLICY TEAM;

-- GAVE FIRST PRIORITY TO ARMS CONTROL, BUT
TENDED TO GIVE OTHER AREAS OF EAST-WEST RELATIONS LOWER
PRIORITY THAN NORTH-SOUTH PROBLEMS IN PLUG FOR NON-
INTERVENTIONSIM BY BOTH U.S. AND USSR;

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-- ADMITTED USSR HAS LITTLE ROLE TO PLAY ON
NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES; AND
-- FORESAW NO MOVEMENT IN SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS
IN NEAR TERMS.

BOVIN HAS SLIGHT MAVERICK LIBERAL POSITION
IN SOVIET PRESS ESTABLISHMENT, AND REMARKS ON PRIORITY

FOR NORTH-SOUTH ISSUES AND SOVIET NON-ROLE ARE ATYPICAL AND PROBABLY MINORITY VIEWS HERE. BEARISHNESS ON CHINA, WE SUSPECT, IS REMARKABLE ONLY FOR ITS FRANKNESS. END SUMMARY.

2. DURING JAN 5 CALL BY ACTING POL COUNSELOR AND EMBOFF, IZVESTIYA SENIOR POLITICAL COMMENTATOR ALEKSANDR BOVIN FOLLOWED REMARKS ON YUGOSLAVIA AND ALBANIA (MOSCOW 220) WITH COMMENT ON 1977 PERSPECTIVES INTERNATIONALLY, AND ESPECIALLY IN U.S.- SOVIET RELATIONS.

3. "DISARMAMENT" WAS FIRST PRIORITY ITEM ON INTERNATIONAL AND U.S.-SOVIET AGENDA, BOVIN SAID, AND STATEMENTS OF BREZHNEV AND PRESIDENT-ELECT CARTER WERE GOOD SIGN THAT BOTH SIDES WISH TO MOVE QUICKLY AND DECISIVELY TO SALT TWO AGREEMENT. VANCE WAS A GOOD APPOINTMENT, HE THOUGHT: HE HAS GREAT EXPERIENCE, AND IS KNOWN TO SOVIETS FROM HIS VISITS TO MOSCOW AND WORK ON ARMS CONTROL ISSUES OVER THE YEARS. CLAIMING ARBATOV AS A GOOD FRIEND, "BY THE WAY," BOVIN SAID ARBATOV IS VERY PLEASED WITH VANCE DESIGNATION. BRZEZINSKI'S RECENT STATEMENTS HAVE ALSO SUPPORTED IMPROVEMENTS OF RELATIONS AND RELAXATION OF TENSIONS BETWEEN THE U.S. AND THE USSR.

4. BOVIN PROFESSED UNCONCERN WITH TRILATERALISM APPROACH ASSOCIATED WITH MANY RANKING MEMBERS OF NEW ADMINISTRATION. HE FOUND IT PERFECTLY NATURAL, HE SAID, THAT THREE MAJOR CENTERS OF "CAPITALIST" WORLD WISHED TO WORK HARDER AT CONFIDENTIAL

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COORDINATING THEIR VIEWS AND EFFORTS. THE SAME GOES FOR HEIGHTENED ATTENTION TO NORTH-SOUTH PROBLEMS ENVISAGED IN PRE-ELECTION STATEMENTS. NORTH-SOUTH PROBLEMS ARE THE AGENDA OF THE FUTURE IN WORLD POLITICS, AND FOCUSING ON THEM MERELY RECOGNIZES THIS REALITY.

5. IN FACT, BOVIN WENT ON, ASIDE FROM THE VITAL PROBLEM OF CONTROLLING AND REDUCING THE DANGERS OF THERMONUCLEAR WAR, WHICH SHOULD HAVE FIRST PRIORITY, HE SAW NOTHING UNNATURAL, AND INDEED MUCH TO BE GAINED FROM DIRECTING U.S. PRIORITIES TO "DOMESTIC" ISSUES BY THE TRILATERAL APPROACH AND TO NORTH-SOUTH PROBLEMS. IN A SENSE, THE SAME WAS TRUE OF THE SOVIET UNION. THE USSR --"FACE IT"--HAS LIMITED RESOURCES, AND PRESSING DOMESTIC DEMANDS ON THEM, AND COULD BENEFIT FROM CONCENTRATING ON THESE DEMANDS.

6. BY THE SAME TOKEN, HOWEVER, THE SOVIET UNION HAS VERY LITTLE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOLUTION OF NORTH-SOUTH

PROBLEMS, BECAUSE IT HAS LITTLE TO SPARE IN THE WAY OF ASSISTANCE TO "SOUTHERN" COUNTRIES. THERE IS, TO BE SURE, ANOTHER IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE IN THE U.S. AND SOVIET POSITIONS, SINCE IF ONE GOES THROUGH THE LIST OF "SOUTHERN" COUNTRIES EACH SIDE SUPPORT, ONE FINDS THE U.S. LINED UP WITH CONSERVATIVE OR REACTIONARY REGIMES-- CHILE, SOUTH KOREA, SOUTH VIETNAM IN ITS DAY--AND THE USSR WITH "PROGRESSIVE." BOTH SIDES, NEVERTHELESS, WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO WORRY MORE ABOUT THEIR OWN PROBLEMS AND INTERVENE LESS IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHERS.

7. THIS GOAL WAS ADMITTEDLY A LONG WAY OFF. THE PROBLEM OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS ILLUSTRATES THIS, SAID BOVIN; IT IS COMPLICATED, AND PROGRESS WILL BE SLOW AND DIFFICULT AT BEST. BUT IT SHOULD BE THE GOAL FOR BOTH THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION, AND THE ISSUE INVOLVED IN INTERVENTION--WHERE, HOW MUCH, BY WHOM, "CUBANS OR CONFIDENTIAL

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NO CUBANS"--WERE SUBSIDIARY AND IN A SENSE SECONDARY.

8. ASKED ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA, BOVIN PROFESSED TO SEE A BASIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO AREAS. IN THE MIDDLE EAST THERE WAS GENUINE POLITICAL CONFLICT AMONG EXISTING STATES AND MOVEMENTS, WHILE SOUTHERN AFRICA IS A MATTER OF OVERCOMING THE LAST REMNANTS OF COLONIALISM. EVEN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, HE SAW A VAST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RHODESIA, WITH ITS SMALL WHITE COLONIAL MINORITY, AND SOUTH AFRICA, WITH ITS FOUR MILLION ORIGINAL "AFRICAN" WHITE SETTLERS. BUT THE GOAL FOR THE U.S. AND THE SOVIET UNION, HE INSISTED SHOULD BE THE SAME: AVOID CONFLICT IN THE SHORT RUN, AND IN THE LONG RUN REFRAIN FROM INTERVENTION AND LET THE LOCAL PEOPLES SETTLE THEIR OWN PROBLEMS.

9. THE REMARK THAT IT SEEMED A PITY THE SOVIETS ADOPTED A POLICY OF ARMED INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA, JUST AT THE MOMENT THE U.S. WAS CONSIDERING THE LESSONS OF VIETNAM, BOVIN SAID HE TOOK THE POINT, BUT DOUBTED THE U.S. HAD LEARNED THE LESSON. HERE HE FEED ON A TICKER REPORT (FROM A RED TRANSMITTAL FOLDER) OF THE BROOKINGS STUDY OF U.S. MILITARY INTERVENTION IN SUPPORT OF POLITICAL GOALS (HE HAS SINCE DRAWN ON REPORT IN JANUARY 6 IZVESTIYA ARTICLE). ASKED ABOUT BROOKINGS DATA ON SOVIET INTERVENTIONISM, HE SAID THEY WERE NOT INCLUDED IN REPORT.

10. ASKED ABOUT CHINA, BOVIN SAID HE EXPECTED NO MOVEMENT IN SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS IN NEAR TERM. CHINESE ARE TOO PREOCCUPIED WITH INTERNAL POLITICAL STRUGGLE, AND IT IS NOT YET OVER. OVER LONGER TERM, HIS "PERSONAL VIEW"

IS THAT MAO WILL NOT LAST AS A GOD BEYOND 1980. WHEN IT WAS OBJECTED THAT THE SOVIET UNION LIVES WITH LENIN TODAY, BOVIN REPLIED THAT MAO WAS A STALIN FIGURE, NOT A LENIN FIGURE, AND WOULD BE FORGOTTEN OR PUSHED ASIDE FROM THE PANTHEON IN FAIRLY SHORT ORDER.
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11. COMMENT. BOVIN HAS A SLIGHT MAVERICK LIBERAL SHADING IN THE SOVIET PRESS ESTABLISHMENT, AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO CAST THE NET OF NON-INTERVENTIONISM OVER THE USSR AS WELL AS THE U.S. IS NOT TYPICAL OF SOVIET SPOKESMEN HERE. MORE INTERESTING, PERHAPS, IS HIS RANK-ORDERING OF PRIORITIES ON THE 1977 INTERNATIONAL AGENDA; ARMS CONTROL, NORTH-SOUTH PROBLEMS (WITH LITTLE ROLE FOR THE USSR), AND ONLY THEN EAST-WEST RELATIONS. HERE, TOO, HOWEVER, HIS IS ALMOST CERTAINLY A MINORITY VIEW. FINALLY, WE NOTE THE FRANK STATEMENT THAT NO MOVEMENT IS TO BE EXPECTED IN SINO-SOVIET RELATIONS IN THE NEAR TERM; IN THIS CASE, WE SUSPECT ONLY THE FRANKNESS IS UNUSUAL.
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